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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000035

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DEPT FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE

E.O. 12958: Declassify 01/15/1919
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CHAUDHRY MEETS "PIVOT PARTY"
LEADER DIACOV

REFS: A. 08 Chisinau 1260 B. 08 Chisinau 1258

Classified by Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry under
1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In a January 13 meeting with Democratic Party (PD) leader Dumitru Diacov, Ambassador Chaudhry questioned Diacov on pre-election conditions and stressed that the world was watching Moldova. Diacov acknowledged the importance of the elections, thanked the USG for its democratization efforts, and complained about Government of Moldova (GOM) restrictions on opposition parties. Diacov said that the PD would take about ten percent of the vote and provide the only "pivot point" around which non-Communist parties of the left and right could join in a coalition after spring elections. End summary.

I Voted for Voronin but Was Betrayed

12. (C) Diacov presented the PD as a peace-loving, centrist party (although it is a member of the Socialist International). He defended his decision to help elect Voronin in 2005, but criticized the President for reneging on promises, harassing the PD, and demanding that Parliament "vote his way and praise him" on all issues. Diacov said that Voronin had broken his promise not to raise the four percent threshold for entry into Parliament. Voronin, he said, also threatened PD mayoral candidates in 2007 with loss of jobs if they stayed in the PD. As a result, said Diacov, all 146 PD candidates for mayor ran as independents, and only 33 won. They still, he said, were PD members, but could not say so officially.

No Coalition with the Party of Communists

13. (C) The GOM, Diacov said, had also refused free air time on public television for opposition parties. Diacov expressed his appreciation for the democratization programs of the National Democratic Institute (NDI). He also noted that the PCRM's refusal to participate in NDI training programs was part of Voronin's habitual rejection of any group that did not cooperate loyally with him. Regretting that the PD had behaved honorably towards Voronin but was singled out for attack, Diacov ruled out a parliamentary coalition with the Party of Communists (PCRM).

Other Parties Problematic, But Coalitions Possible

¶4. (C) Diacov also criticized other political leaders. The leader of Our Moldova Alliance (AMN), Serafim Urechean (ref B), he said, was rude and confused. Nevertheless, Diacov said that he had voted with the AMN in 14 raions to elect AMN council chairs, and would be willing to form a parliamentary coalition in 2009. Christian Democrat (PPCD) leader Iurie Rosca (ref A), he noted, was inciting the people against the PD, and paying activists to reverse his dropping poll numbers. Diacov said that he offered an alliance with Social Democrat (PSD) leader Dumitru Braghis, but Braghis "did not want to lose his social democrat brand" and refused. Diacov said that his former colleague (and now Liberal Democrat leader) Vlad Filat was spending millions to buy party members and votes. Despite these criticisms, Diacov said that the PD would not attack any party or person during the campaign, in order to maintain its potential as a unifying pivot in Moldovan politics.

Diacov Hedges His Vote Predictions

¶5. (C) Diacov emphasized that Moldova was ahead of Romania in democratization and economic reforms in the 1990s, and had since slipped far behind under PCRM rule. He stated that pensioners would continue to vote for the PCRM because of the party's paternalistic image. Diacov predicted that PD and PCRM would be winners on the left, and that Urechean's AMN and the Liberal Party (PL)

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would likely represent the right in Parliament. (Note: He hedged his bets by noting the weakness of PL deputy leader, Chisinau Mayor Dorin Chirtoaca, in the regions, and Urechean's "confused personality." Former Prime Minister Tarlev's Centrist Union, he noted, had good name recognition, and PLDM's Filat was spending millions. End note.)

Comment

¶6. (C) Diacov gave a realistic assessment of his party's electoral strengths. Only the relative parliamentary strengths of the winners will determine whether he will be allowed to play his role as the Great Unifier, and overcome the strong mutual animosities of the opposition parties.

CHAUDHRY